

ROLES AND MISSIONS: ARE WE DOING IT RIGHT?

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

ROLES AND MISSIONS: ARE WE DOING IT RIGHT?

by

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ABSTRACT

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The US military needs to optimize its resources and cut out waste wherever possible. With the national debt topping 9.4 trillion dollars, and no end in sight in the war on terror, the military needs to do a better job allocating and spending its funding. As senior military leaders fight over the roles and missions of the services, the unacceptable easy answer is to allow the services to buy equipment they think they need to support roles they deem necessary to accomplish their missions. Alternately, the civilian leadership should play a more active role determining roles and missions. For example, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) should exert its oversight authority to influence the assignment of roles and missions and not allow a service to fund programs and buy equipment outside its assigned roles and missions. This would also force the services to more closely work together to better optimize a unity of effort, save tax dollars, and make more money available for the war on terror.

ROLES AND MISSIONS: ARE WE DOING IT RIGHT?

One can't help to see the Army's desire for an intra-theater airlift as a sort of regression when one considers that the Air Force grew into a separate service from its origins as the Army Air Corps in the first place.

—Congressman Ike Skelton, Missouri
Chairman, House Armed Service Committee

As of November 2007, the United States national debt topped \$9.4 trillion dollars.¹ With a population of approximately 303,579,466, this means each US citizen owes \$30,963.89! This debt grows at a rate of \$1.47 billion every day, with no end in sight.² Obviously there is more to the national debt than what the numbers above demonstrate, but the point is clear: there needs to be a change in the mindset of all Americans. Every tax-payer funded organization needs to do whatever it can to reduce wasteful spending, and the US military is no exception. The current war in Iraq, according to the Democratic Party's national website, is costing the US taxpayers \$195 million every day³, or \$71 billion per year. This fact puts the US military right in the middle of the "funding debate." Funding everywhere will soon be scrutinized even more delicately and the US military needs to do what it can to maximize every dollar it receives.

The United States military spent \$626.1 billion in 2007.⁴ The military budget was set at \$439.3 billion, but the 2007 supplemental funding bills required for the ongoing Global War on Terror (GWOT) made up the difference. The total military spending is roughly 20 percent of the U.S. budget. The point is to demonstrate the enormity of taxes required to maintain the US military's current commitments. The 2008 numbers are expected to grow to \$623.1 billion.⁵ The point of this research is not to insinuate any need for a military spending cut. The idea is to show the desperate need to re-look at how the US military spends its money.

A “sure-fire” way to reduce wasteful spending in the military is to ensure a unity of effort, or lack of duplicating efforts among all the branches of the military. Every military planner has heard and used the phrase “unity of effort” with regards to maximizing potential by using the synergistic effects of combined operations. Currently, the US military branches waste too much money on duplicated efforts. Yes, at times there is a specific requirement or reason to have two or more services maintain a similar capability. But usually, the real issue is that two or more services want to either be the lead agency for a certain capability, or one service does not trust the other branch will support it when needed. This lack of trust or desire to be the lead agent and “own” the asset has led to numerous examples of a duplication of effort.

This research outlines a few examples of duplicated efforts, and examples of poor management of the roles and missions. “Roles and Missions” is the term used to define the actual combat capability of each branch of service. Roles and missions could also be called “core competencies” and drive the acquisition programs as well as the training of troops. It also means there is a chance certain military branches will not take part in certain operations if their services are not needed. The research will conclude with a recommendation that the House Armed Services Committee, (HASC) using its constitutional given right, take positive action to control the roles and missions of the services. By having the HASC assign the roles and missions and not allow a service to spend money on any unassigned mission, duplication will be minimized and wasteful spending will be reduced.

This research will also show how the branches of military service need to be held accountable, and forced to stay within their assigned roles and missions by something

outside the Department of Defense. The HASC should use its ability to control the purse strings to take the lead to make sure the military services are not duplicating efforts. By giving the authority directly to the HASC, the military branches will be forced to work together, and will end waste in the military acquisitions, a waste the military can no longer afford.

History

During the founding of the United States of America there were only land and sea forces. The roles of the military branches were easily explained, mostly through the medium in which they operated. The Army's mission was to fight the land wars and the US Navy was used for maritime operations. The roles were defined more by common sense than by any formal agreement. As military equipment advanced, the division of the roles and missions became more pronounced.

The National Security Act of 1947 caused far-reaching changes in the military establishment. The War Department and Navy Department merged into a single Department of Defense under the Secretary of Defense and the Department of the Air Force was created.⁶ The law also created the National Security Council (NSC), but failed to mention or define the roles and missions of each branch of service. The Air Force was created to handle the long-range or "nuclear" bombing mission, to the dismay of the Navy which also wanted a fleet of long-range nuclear bombers.

The service chiefs at the time tried to carve out the specified roles, but could not gain a consensus. President Harry S. Truman ordered the service chiefs to try again to define the roles and missions. The President demanded the service chiefs gather and

work out their differences. He suggested a resort-type setting, and the meeting was set for 11 to 14 March, 1948 in Key West, Florida.

The now famous “Key West Agreement” released what was known as the “Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff” but did little to truly divide up the roles and missions. There were problems from the onset and the agreement did not go far enough. Not only did it not lay out specific responsibilities of each service, it also had no teeth and did not address any system to monitor the services’ adherence to the agreement.

The Air Force gained control of all aircraft minus what the Army needed for medical evacuation operations. The Navy kept airplanes for its maritime fighting, but lost its bid for long-range bombers. There was no deadline or timeline issued, nor was a system set up to monitor adherence to the agreement. Finally, there was no formal action dictating how or when the roles and missions debate would be readdressed. As a result of the Key West Agreement, the Army was still able to procure not only a large helicopter fleet, but some light transport aircraft as well. Although the Navy lost its bid for the bombers, it was able to develop its desired aircraft carriers with vast numbers of fighter aircraft onboard.

The real problem with the Key West Agreement and the numerous subsequent agreements is that they were never codified into law. Agreement on how the services would handle the divisions of the roles and missions in the future was also lacking. The invention of the airplane should have triggered the need to have a system in place to assign roles and missions in the future. It was obvious the airplane was not going to be the last invention with military implications. The senior leadership should have

recognized the potential for enormous waste if someone did not control the equipment each service acquired, and the need to minimize the duplication of effort. In 1992, Senator Sam Nunn remarked how the Goldwater-Nichols Act did not complete the reform needed, and left the problem of the assignment of the roles and missions unsolved.⁷ He went on to say, “Redundancy and duplication are costing billions of dollars every year. We are the only military in the world with four air forces.”⁸

Many have tried to solve this problem, with limited or no success. From the first attempt to define the roles of the military branches in 1947, through the ongoing fight today, the military has tried unsuccessfully to solve the problem. Every few years the “roles and missions” discussion seems to get blurred as each service leadership has its own ideas how to best accomplish any new mission. The military branches will invest money with little or no cooperation. Space operations, cyberspace, unmanned aerial vehicles, just to name a few, have all become issues and demonstrated the need for a delineation of the responsibilities of each service. It is time for a non-military organization to take responsibility and assign the roles and missions to a lead agent. This organization needs to formally assign the mission to the appropriate service, and then fund the requirement. Without a new system to assign a lead agency in place each department is left to fund its own separate roles and missions. This is the duplication of effort Senator Nunn talked about, and what needs to be avoided.

Article 1, Section 8 of the US Constitution outlines the roles of the US Congress. Besides saying Congress is the only body that can declare war, it also says the Congress is tasked with raising and supporting Armies and providing and maintaining a navy.⁹ The HASC is the arm of Congress used to work military issues. In a phone

interview with current HASC staffer, Mr. Mark Lewis stated the HASC gets all its power from these few words.¹⁰ As simple as these words may seem, the HASC does authorize all military spending to include pay raises and benefits enjoyed by US military members. Therefore, the US Congress has the authority to regulate the roles and missions since it controls the dollars used to fund the requirements and programs. There is no better control than by the purse.

Sometimes the services take unilateral steps themselves to control what they think is theirs by definition or namesake. The Air Force, as the name implies, is responsible for control of the airspace above and around the battle field, and tasked to ensure the ground forces are free from aerial attack. The mission of the United States Air Force is to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests to fly and fight in air, space and cyberspace.¹¹ The “cyberspace” part was recently added to the mission statement unilaterally, to the disdain of the sister-services who saw it as a grab at the cyberspace mission. Obviously the name of a service should not be the only argument used to define roles and missions. There are many differences of opinions on many of the ways in which our forces fight, and this research paper does not have the depth to cover them all. The research will address the main inter-service conflicts present today. Ultimately, I will recommend that one organization, the HASC, use its constitutional authority to assign the roles and missions. A service should not spend money on any role or mission not assigned to it without the expressed consent of the HASC.

Because there has been no formal system in place to monitor the military branches in the past, the HASC should also go back and study the current roles and

missions of each service. Each military branch needs to be studied and re-organized. Many military programs are outside what the service assigned roles should be. These programs should be immediately cancelled, or handed over to the lead agency. The services must also be confident that the selected service will provide the capabilities required to meet the needs of the other services.

Congress has long asserted an implicit authority to inquire into the execution of its laws.¹² In the Legislative Act of 1946, it mandated standing committees “to exercise continual watchfulness” over programs and agencies under their jurisdiction.¹³ I argue that this oversight needs to be incorporated earlier into the system instead of later, after the mistakes have been made.

This is an enormous responsibility. Not only would Congress, through the HASC, be responsible for assuring the roles are properly assigned and resourced, it would also be required to ensure the services are properly supporting each other. Just as a shipping company worries about its image in the mind of the company whose goods are being shipped, the service designated as the lead agency needs to worry about its image in the eyes of the service it is supporting. The same organization responsible for assigning the roles and missions, the HASC, should also have the responsibility to ensure the services are properly supporting each other. This would eliminate the services’ fear of not getting the support they need when they need it. The service chiefs would be allowed to air their disagreement to the HASC if they feel they are not getting the proper support. Thus the supporting service would feel obligated to supply the needed support to the supported service, or have to answer to the HASC why they were unable.

My intent is not to side swipe the safety precautions of the acquisition process. This research will demonstrate the need to re-evaluate the acquisition process used to ensure the service branches do not needlessly acquire military equipment outside of their areas of expertise. This reform is not going to be easy, nor will it happen overnight, but it is obvious it needs to happen soon. The price of military hardware is growing at an amazing rate. During World War II, a P-51 fighter aircraft was priced at \$60,000 in today's dollars.¹⁴ Today, fighter aircraft are closer to \$200 million each. This same correlation can be made in any of the services desired hardware. The Navy's request for the Super Carrier totals over \$5 billion.¹⁵ The Army wanted to buy the Crusader, a self propelled howitzer, which carried a price tag of \$329 million each.¹⁶

The increased use of the military hardware due to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has vastly accelerated the replacement schedule. This means the acquisition process will be in full swing in the coming years. Therefore it is imperative the national government do something now to ensure the proper allocation of missions.

The Department of Defense has a complex budgeting system in place which starts with the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report. The QDR uses the National Security Strategy, and then the National Defense Strategy to determine the requirements placed on it by the country's civilian leadership. With these requirements, the military then uses the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process to allocate resources. My intent is not to dissect the PPBE process or examine its flaws. It is important to note, however, that there is a process that outlines the needs of the services, and a joint process in place to recommend to the service chiefs what the military branches should buy. John Walsh said, "As a logical starting point, the strategy

or planning phase determines and validates the capabilities required by the Department of Defense to implement both the National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy and to achieve the objectives of the National Security Strategy.”¹⁷ The system may seem cumbersome, but it is effective in determining what equipment should be purchased. But this system falls short in determining what service should buy the required equipment.

The final step in the process is the budget authority, granted by Congress via appropriation legislation. Once Congress approves the President's budget, the military then gets the money to buy the appropriated programs. The problem with this system is the inability of the services to successfully pick a single lead-agent and allow that lead-agent to fulfill the need. Since the joint process mentioned above is still run by military officers, they are still bound by their loyalties to their service chiefs. These loyalties result in the service chiefs still investing in programs they deem important. Service chiefs routinely find themselves briefing on Capitol Hill, defending their programs and budgets, often after they have funded programs outside their appropriate areas.

The Joint Requirement Oversight Council (JROC) is the organization set up to advise the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the service chiefs, on the requirements of the services. The JROC was established in 1986 as part of the Defense Reorganization Act to maximize joint acquisitions. However, the JROC has not been able to solve the “roles and missions” problem. A House panel said it believes the JROC today is “too isolated from the realities of the acquisition and budget process.”¹⁸ Therefore, it is appropriate to look elsewhere for a solution.

As argued earlier, the HASC is the best possible solution. The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) would also be involved since it would vote on and also approve the decisions, as would both bodies of Congress. The HASC with its 63 members has the time to best investigate the issues. The SASC, with its 25 members, would undoubtedly study the issues, but would not be the lead agency, and would rely on the opinions of the HASC members. It is important to point out the HASC would be the lead agency, but both bodies of Congress would vote to approve any law, thus giving the true power to the Congress as a whole.

Cyberspace

The threat from cyber attacks is the latest example of an uncoordinated and duplicated effort in our military branches. As the services decided there truly was (and is) a unique and new threat, all dumped money into offices inside their services to set up hacker-proof fire walls on their computer systems. Now there are numerous different systems inside the US military that are incompatible with each other. Nobody faults the commanders for trying to protect their resources, but one should ask; would it not have been better for one service to start working the problem in coordination with the other services and thus avoiding the separate services from working the same thing without any coordination? How much money was wasted by the separate services trying to protect their own networks and how much is it going to cost to go back and have one service go backwards and work to make all the services' independent systems compatible with each others?

The United States Air Force went so far as to start a new Major Command called "Cyber Command."¹⁹ It would have been better for the services to determine who they

think is best suited and equipped to be the lead agent. Assuming the HASC takes control of the roles and missions, the service chiefs would then have briefed the HASC on their ideas. It would have been the HASC's decision to decide a lead agent and then fund the requirement. The other services would then supply their requirements to the lead agent. The lead agency would then determine the required funding and request it through the current funding process. Had this process been in place, and the service chiefs known there were going to brief the HASC, they would have been more likely to cooperate fully and determine the best course of action prior to being mandated by the HASC how to handle the new requirement. The HASC would have listened to the service chiefs, determined a lead agency and funded the program. This would have saved the services from independently spending money to defend their computer systems, and then going back later to ensure the required compatibility.

Secondary benefits of the HASC assigning the roles and services would include a better effort from the service chiefs to decide the best lead agent. If the service chiefs understood the HASC was going to hold hearings to designate only one lead agent, they would be more likely to communicate and cooperate to best articulate their ideas.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have been used by all the services for many years. The additional information presented to the battlefield commander from a small unmanned flying machine with a camera meant the company or battalion commander could see the enemy before direct contact was made. This advantage was obvious and phenomenal and every commander wanted access to a UAV. The Israeli military showed the great potential of UAVs during the 1982 conflict in the Bekaa Valley,

Lebanon. In a carefully planned and executed operation, the Israelis used the UAVs to activate the Syrian air defenses allowing the manned aircraft to then attack these assets.²⁰ The use of the UAVs greatly aided the Israeli Air Force in its attack, giving it advantages never seen before in aerial combat. The Syrian-owned air defense system was quickly overwhelmed and defeated.

In the early 1990's, the Air Force started looking into larger UAVs, with loiter time in excess of 24 hours. A San Diego, California based company named General Atomics (GA) had designed and built an airframe that could fly for up to 40 hours, and carry sensors capable of spying on the enemy from a safe altitude, above the sight and hearing of the enemy on the ground. The Air Force immediately jumped at the opportunity and contracted with GA in 1994 to start test flights. In 1995, the MQ-1 Predator flew in a joint exercise known as ROVING SANDS. It performed so well, it was quickly deployed to help in the ongoing conflict in the Balkans in the summer of 1995. The enormous benefit these assets added to the battlefield was obvious very quickly. The system could quietly fly high above the battlefield for extended hours, sending live video feeds and infra-red pictures of the situation on the ground to anyone with a receiver.

In 2001, the Air Force added a laser designator for use with precision-guided munitions and the ability to employ Hellfire missiles from the Predator.²¹ With the addition of these small missiles, and the further demonstration of the unique capabilities of unmanned flight, it did not take long for the Army, which was still using many different and smaller tactical UAVs, to want the same asset. The Army wanted to give its battalion commanders the capability to see and follow their enemies prior to the

engagement. With limited assets available, the Air Force could not give the “tactical level” information to the Army units in the combat zones. This lack of capability led the Army to believe it obviously needed its own “Predator-type” fleet.

The Army awarded GA a contract in 2005 for 132 airframes.²² Because the Army was not already bound by a contract, it was able to request improvements from the Air Force’s MQ-1 Predator fleet. The Army changed the engine to meet its requirement for one type of fuel on the battlefield, JP-4 or JP-8. This is the same fuel most aviation assets use, yet different than the fuel the Air Force’s Predator requires. The Army also wanted the newer engine, the Thielert diesel, because it has a life duration ten times that of the Rotax engine used on the Air Force’s Predator.²³ According to Mr. Dyke Weatherington, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, (OSD(AT&L)), the Rotax engine was pulled off the shelf to quickly assemble and fly the Predator, and was not optimized for the flight regime used by Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS). After 250 flight hours the Rotax engine is replaced and literally thrown away, not to be used again. The Thielert engine not only uses normal military aviation fuel, but also only needs an overhaul after 2,500 flight hours.

The Army, knowing GA could not produce the required Ground Control Stations (GCS) fast enough due to GA’s commitment to the Air Force, decided to instead modify its current inventory of UAV GCSs to fly its new UAV, now known as the Army’s MQ-1C Sky Warrior. This step seemed logical, but the net result is the two services UASs are now incompatible with the other with almost identical roles. Under the current plan, once the Army starts to deploy their MQ-1C Sky Warrior into theater, there will literally be two separate GCSs sitting right next to each other, but totally incompatible with the

other services' aircraft. The Air Force cannot fly the Army MQ-1C Sky Warrior, nor can the Army fly the Air Force MQ-1 Predator or the newer, larger Air Force MQ-9 Reaper airframes. This is a classic example of a duplication of effort and a waste of tax dollars.

Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England told the Army and Air Force in a 13 June 2007 memorandum to get over their differences and work together to develop and buy Predator-Class UAVs.²⁴ But it was too late. The Army argues that its investment into the large UAS program led to the improvement of the engine, duration of flight and sensors. That is true, but since the programs are not integrated, the improvements are only being seen on the Army's airframes.

The bigger problem is the incompatibility of the systems. Had the HASC been involved earlier, it could have mandated the two variations be built with certain common systems, allowing the sharing of the information and assets. At a minimum, the GCS should be capable of flying either system, not just one or the other. Air Force Chief of Staff, T. Michael Moseley, proclaimed on 5 March 2007 a need for a joint, theater-wide ISR strategy for everything flying above 3,500 feet.²⁵ General Moseley went on to say, "High on the list of benefits was a potential savings of around \$1.7 billion to be gleaned from executive agency consolidation of the various programs."²⁶ This money could have improved the overall UAS program.

If the Army is allowed to fly its UAVs, de-confliction of the airspace above the battlefield will be extremely difficult if not impossible. In past wars, the military services used altitude to de-conflict the airspace. The Army is normally allowed to fly its smaller UAVs (and other assets) below 3,500 feet AGL, below most of the Air Force assets. This superficial line-in-the-sky allows some margin of safety by separating the flying

assets, avoiding midair collisions. But the MQ-1C Sky Warrior the Army is buying is optimized to fly well above this altitude. The ordnance and sensors it is designed to carry are optimally used from altitudes above 10,000 feet. With the size of the UAS fleet growing as fast as GA can make the airframes and GCSs, de-confliction has become another major issue. It will only be a matter of time before there is a mid-air collision, and then the services will be forced to work the issue. By then, both the Air Force and the Army will have spent billions of dollars on an asset which could have been added to the larger combined fleet of UAVs used more efficiently and effectively. Assuming the Air Force would be the lead agent for UAS operations, the Army would have to work with the Air Force to get the information provided to the ground commanders. The Army does not want to give up this control and is fighting hard to maintain its own fleet of UAVs.

The Army has tried to add in an automated system to aid in the airspace de-confliction problem. It is obvious both services have to work to solve this problem together, but to date, the Air Force has not funded any initiative for de-confliction of UAS' in flight. The Army also has very limited knowledge of flying unmanned assets used above 3,500 feet AGL. It has limited acquisition experience with large unmanned flying assets and even less experience with regard to satellite band widths required to control the UAVs. At a minimum, the Army is duplicating the efforts of fielding an asset well along in the production phase in the US Air Force.

The better solution would have been for the HASC to evaluate the new asset/technology and assign it to whatever service it deemed appropriate off of the previously coordinated roles and missions it assigned earlier. The HASC could have

properly funded the appropriate service to study, acquire, maintain and ultimately optimize the use of this new asset. Having two services separately acquire the same capability is costly, and leads to a duplication of effort, not a unity of effort, and wasted tax dollars. Assuming the HASC would have selected the Air Force to maintain all UAVs that operate above 3,500 feet AGL, the Air Force could then acquire the assets as fast as possible, without forcing the producing company, in this case, General Atomics, from splitting production capability between two services.

The Army might not have felt forced to acquire its own large UAS fleet had it felt the Air Force supplied it with what it needed. Possible reasons why the Army felt it was getting insufficient UAS support were threefold. First, the Air Force did not properly explain the limited resources in country, and failed to show the development plan to the Army leadership. Secondly, the Air Force failed to show that limited resources lead to the more strategic use of the assets. For example, the operators could not zero in on the reconnaissance assets to a small enough picture to be useful to the Army commanders on the ground. Thirdly, the Army works on a much smaller scale than the Air Force. The Army battalion commander wants the assets to watch soldiers on their foot patrols, the Air Force would prefer to use the limited assets to monitor a whole area of a city. With the continued addition of more UAS assets there might be some middle ground between the commanders, but we do not need the Army flying their own UASs over the battlefield.

The HASC should immediately demand the Army and the Air Force immediately merge their programs and there should be one organized UAS program. That being said, the Air Force needs to do a better job getting the Army the UAS support it needs,

and at a minimum, explain the limitations to the Army so it understands why some support may not be possible at the current time, and outline when the assets might be available for use as the Army desires.

Joint Cargo Aircraft

The Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA) is another misguided project derived from misgivings between the services which will lead to wasted tax payer dollars. The Army wants a small tactical airlift aircraft to quickly supply its outposts. The common phrase used to describe the need is “the last mile.” The Air Force is currently trying to replace its older C-130s, but is not receiving the required funding to buy as many as required. With competing resources, the C-130s cannot be purchased fast enough to meet the demand for tactical airlift, making it hard for the Army to move its supplies to its outposts. Again, the Army’s answer to the shortfall is to purchase its own tactical airlift assets. As stated previously, HASC chairman, Missouri Congressman Ike Skelton said, “One can’t help to see the Army’s desire for intra-theater airlift as a sort of regression when one considers that the Air Force grew into a separate service from its origins as the Army Air Corps in the first place.” Under the Key West Agreement, the Army was allowed to maintain an airlift fleet for medical evacuations, but this mission has morphed into the tactical airlift needed for the “last tactical mile.”

A better solution would be for the Army to properly inform the Air Force of its requirements and allow the Air Force to do its job; providing airlift for its customers. The Army is deep into the procurement of the twin-engine light cargo aircraft, and wasting money in the process. The Air Force is buying the C-130J, and could perform the required airlift missions required by the Army if the Army could wait until the planes are

built. The Army requirement for the JCA is the ability to operate from a 2,000 foot unprepared runway. The C-130J needs 3,000 feet, but the point here is the wasted tax dollars as the Army goes out to procure an asset that is outside its assigned roles. Again the HASC needs to step in and properly evaluate the mission, and assign it to the service it thinks is best equipped to perform the mission. The Army currently has light cargo aircraft, but it seems fairly intuitive the Air Force should have been given the mission of airlift, both strategic and tactical. After all, that is what the Air Force does.

Again, "how did we get here?" The Air Force does have a reputation for being difficult to work with. This is an important note. What do most civilian companies do when they are not happy with one of their suppliers? The common sense answer is to get another supplier who will give you what you want. Obviously the Army does not have another airlift company to choose from, so they elected to build the capability themselves. The Air Force needs to be more flexible, and agile enough to supply its customer what it needs, within reason. This is not to say the Air Force should do everything the Army commander wants, but there should be some room for improvement within the realm of the possible. If the Army feels it cannot depend on the Air Force for its needs, it should bring the issue to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the issue could be studied and rectified. The Chairman could then force the Air Force to re-look the way it is doing business and possibly find a better way to accomplish the mission. Assuming the HASC would hold regular hearings with the service chiefs, should the chiefs have difficulties in finding common ground, the HASC would have the responsibility of looking into the situation and determining (without any preconceived biases) a best possible solution.

Air Base Defense

The problem of roles and missions affects more than just air frames and equipment. Airbase defense in combat zones is another example of the lack of cooperation between the services and an area needing reconciliation. The 1985 Joint Security Agreement mandated that the Army provide exterior defense for Air Force bases.²⁷ This agreement meant the Army would protect the perimeter of US Air Force bases overseas, preventing attacks to the bases and protecting the lanes used for takeoff and landing aircraft. The defining line of who protected what became commonly known as “outside and inside the wire,” wire meaning the fence usually used to define the immediate perimeter of an Air Force Base. The Army would patrol an area up to ten miles around the outside of the wire fence.

During Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, it became apparent the agreement was impractical. The Army did not have the manpower required to patrol air bases not in the direct area of its control. During these operations US air bases were hundreds of miles away from the battlefield. The Army formerly abrogated the Joint Security Agreement in 2005, meaning the Air Force would be forced to protect its bases from attack outside the wire. The Air Force adopted the role of Air Base Defense and started to rethink how it would accomplish this role. Interestingly, Joint Security Agreement 9 gave the USAF ground combat training to the Army, meaning the Air Force Security Forces personnel would train in the Army school located at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The Air Force was not happy with the training at Fort Dix, and in 1995 ended the agreement and started training its own personnel once again.

During the 1990's, the Air Force used bases outside the direct conflict area, thus negating the threat normally associated with bases near enemy forces, and the mission

did not seem to have much traction with the leadership of the US Air Force. But the distance between the Air Force bases and the enemy is much different in the ongoing war in Iraq since the bases are located inside the combat zone. This change reverses the previous lack of concern over who is protecting the bases. The Air Force, which accepted the mission, was slow to act. Bases in Iraq were being attacked daily, and little was done to prevent these attacks.

The Air Force did stand up a temporary task force, called Operation DESERT SAFESIDE, also known as “Task Force 1041,” planned by Col Brad Spacy, an Air Force Security Forces officer. Task Force 1041 had great success in its short time in the summer of 2004 protecting Balad Air Base, Iraq.²⁸ The sixty-day mission was considered a huge success by senior leaders in the Air Force. US Air Force personnel captured 17 high-valued targets and over 100 other insurgents, but any follow-on operations were canceled by some of the same Air Force commanders who did not see this project as an Air Force core mission.

Recently signed Joint Doctrine now assigns the role of defending bases to the owning base commander, regardless of service.²⁹ Even though the USAF is operating bases in the AOR, it is not continuing with any Operation SAFESIDE. Consequently, there are nightly mortar attacks penetrating the defenses, and landing on the airfields. If the Air Force is going to accept a mission, it needs to understand the risks associated with it.

As of early 2008, bases in Iraq are being protected in an ad hoc arrangement of excess air power. As Predator UAVs return from missions, if they have any loiter time left, they are staying airborne above the bases looking for insurgent mortar teams. With

luck, and sometimes with the help of an airborne JSTAR, they find mortar teams near the bases and call in attacks either during the act of attacking an air base, or shortly thereafter if possible. Although this system works, this is not consistent with approved doctrine and is not always available. Now, with mortar rounds falling inside the wire, there is a debate ongoing over who should be protecting the air bases.

With the HASC controlling the roles and missions, the Army would have had to approach the HASC and ask to be relieved of the role. The HASC could have then held hearings, including the Air Force leadership, and studied the best possible solution prior to the problem becoming critical. If the HASC sided with the Army, and relieved it of the role of air base defense, it would have handed the role to the Air Force, at which time the Air Force chief would have had to better plan for such activities.

House Armed Services Committee

It does not take long to understand there is a problem. The US military needs to do a better job assigning missions and allocate resources properly to these missions instead of having each service invest money into anything it deems appropriate. The services, trying to do what they think is best, but without proper coordination, are wasting billions of dollars, and possibly hurting the military by not getting the best bang for the buck. The best solution is to have the HASC take the bull by the horns and start demanding the services provide documentation for any program they plan to fund above a certain threshold. The HASC should tell the service chiefs they are not allowed to spend more than \$20 million on any new acquisition project without its approval. Above the \$20 million level, the service chiefs would be required to brief the HASC on the programs and acquisitions. This would allow the HASC time to fairly study the program

and hold hearings if required, to get the opinions of the sister services, and make an informed decision before any money is wasted. The HASC would then assign a “lead agency” and properly fund the organization to ensure the mission is best covered.

The military should be required to brief the HASC every four years, aligned with the Quadrennial Defense Reviews, to explain the unity of efforts. This briefing could also serve as a conduit for the service chiefs to explain their differences and how to best fix the problems. This system should be formalized, and written into law. With history as an indicator, it is obvious the service chiefs and the Secretary of Defense are incapable of solving the problem on their own. This fight has been ongoing since 1947. Even General Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explained to Senator Sam Nunn in 1992 the difficulties of getting the services to agree on an executive agent for many programs.³⁰

From 1947 when President Truman ordered the service chiefs to solve the problem, to 1992 when Senator Nunn ordered General Powell to do the same, the military has been unable to change or resolve the issue. It seems obvious something outside the military structure is going to be part of the solution. We can no longer wait and allow the military branches to continue wasting billions of dollars on duplicated efforts. Having the HASC assign roles and missions to the branches of military might not be the perfect solution, but it is worth a try because nothing else has worked.

The HASC has taken bold steps in the right direction. Current Chairman of the HASC, Congressman Ike Skelton from Missouri, recently established the Roles and Missions panel.³¹ This panel was established to investigate the issues born out of the continuing problems with the divisions of the roles and missions inside the military

branches. Article II, Section 2.1 of the U.S. Constitution states the President will be the commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the United States. Most military officers understand the need for the control of the military to stay under the civilian authority of the United States government.

Many may be surprised to know the same article goes on to read, “he (the President) may require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive departments, upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices.”³² A law, passed much like the Goldwaters-Nichols Act of 1986, assigning the roles and missions to the civilian leaders, signed by the president, could use Article II of the constitution as its legal backing. The HASC currently has the duty of military oversight. This oversight authority would merely be expanded and more direct.

Conclusion

Every year senior US military leaders are approached with new and more advanced threats. Obviously these generals jump at each threat and immediately look for the best solution to combat it. But at times, the service chiefs find themselves dumping money into the research of a new threat with little or no coordination with the sister services. At times, the services will then compete over the title of “lead agency,” again wasting money as two or more services invest great sums of money addressing the threat. The country can no longer afford to waste money, and this duplication of effort needs to be minimized.

As the US national debt continues to grow, the stress and demand to limit spending becomes ever more important. The US military will be asked to continue to fight the Global War on Terrorism, no matter the cost. But the current wars should not

be used as an excuse to practice wasteful spending. The US military should look at optimizing what few dollars are allocated to it, and must cut any waste to a minimum.

Efficiency needs to be the paramount idea and driving force. Effectiveness can no longer be used as an excuse for wasteful spending. Currently, as the service chiefs define roles and missions, they develop the associated material and training requirements to match these roles and missions. Reducing any “duplication of effort” by better defining and then assigning the roles and missions to the services will reduce waste. It is imperative the services do not compete amongst themselves and grab at roles and missions as they see best to fit their service.

The HASC needs to be more involved and have a more active jurisdiction into the assignment of the roles and missions to ensure there is no duplication and waste. Again, as Ike Skelton, House Armed Services Committee Chair, and a Democratic Congressman from Missouri, understands the problem and has not only requested a HASC-run committee to study the roles and missions, he also recently moved over \$150 million from the Army to the USAF in the JCA program. It is time to reconsider the military spending machine, and there is no time to spare. It has become obvious the services, nor the Secretary of Defense, are capable of making the hard decisions. This has been an enduring problem since the creation of the Air Force in 1947, and left alone, will continue unabated.

As the military leaders continue to look through rose-colored glasses, the US taxpayers are left not only with the bill, but also a military that is not as strong as it should be. The Congress needs to pass a law formally tasking the HASC with the responsibility for assigning the roles and missions to each branch of service. The law

should stipulate the services will not be allowed to spend more than \$20 million dollars on any new equipment without first gaining the approval from the HASC. The HASC should immediately demand the service chiefs brief them on the on-going projects, and for the services to better manage their budgets to minimize waste. Wasteful military spending will continue until the HASC steps up and demands the change. There is no time to waste.

Endnotes

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